

# BURSITIS

## ◆ What is it?

A bursa is a soft, fluid-filled sac, similar to a water balloon, that serves as a cushion between bone and soft tissue structures, such as tendon and skin. Bursitis is inflammation of the bursa. Bursitis occurs most commonly in or near the shoulder, elbow, knee, hip, or back of the heel.

## ◆ Signs and Symptoms of this Condition

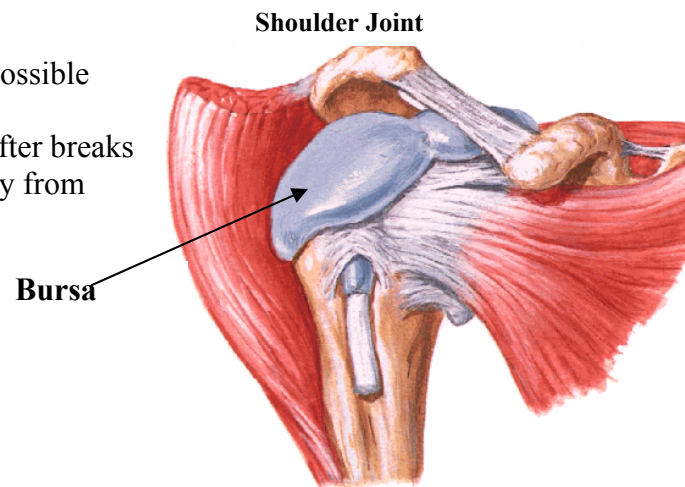
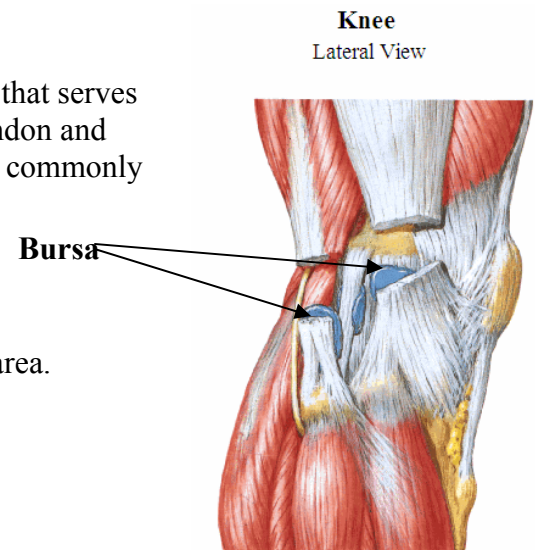
- Pain, tenderness, and limited movement in the affected area.
- Localized swelling of the bursa itself.
- Tenderness focally over the bursa.

## ◆ Causes

- Direct injury/contusion to a joint or bursa
- Overuse or strenuous, unaccustomed exercise of a joint
- Prolonged pressure on a bursa (resting on elbows or prolonged kneeling on knees)
- Infection
- Arthritis
- Gout

## ◆ What Can I do to Prevent Bursitis?

- Adequate warm-up prior to physical activity
- Avoid injuries or overuse of muscles whenever possible
  - Slow progression into exercise program
  - Slowly and progressively return to exercise after breaks from physical activity due to schedule or recovery from injury
- Appropriately warm up and cool down
- Maintain appropriate conditioning:
  - Joint flexibility
  - Muscle strength and endurance
  - Cardiovascular fitness
- Use proper technique and protective equipment
- To prevent lower extremity bursitis, runners should change running shoes regularly (every 6-9 months)



## ◆ Prognosis

- This is a common but not serious problem. Symptoms usually subside within between 2-6 weeks with treatment depending upon duration of symptoms before initiating treatment (acute vs chronic) and severity

## ◆ Treatment

- Rest – avoid activities that aggravate symptoms (running for lower extremity bursitis and use of the involved upper extremity joint when it occurs in the upper extremity).
- Ice massage over the painful bursa 10 minutes 1-2 times per day. (Ice massage is performed by filling paper or foam cups with water and freezing them. Take the frozen cup and tear off the outer edge of the cup near the lip to expose the ice. Hold the cup with one hand and place the ice portion so that it is in contact with the injured/painful area and rub in circles over the painful area).
- Stretching of the muscle groups whose tendons pass over or around the inflamed bursa (i.e. stretching the calf muscles when there is an inflamed bursa on the back of the heel)
- Anti-inflammatory medication (aspirin, ibuprofen, etc).
- Significant pain, swelling, and REDNESS around the bursa may indicate an infected bursa. In this case, you should see your physician, and antibiotics may be required.
- SLOWLY progress back into full activity once you are symptom-free and the bursa is no longer tender/painful to press on.